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Overcoming Indigenous Disadvantage

Key Indicators 2003

OVERVIEW

Steering Committee for the Review of Government Service Provision

November 2003

FOREWORD

Notwithstanding many years of policy attention, this Report confirms that Indigenous Australians continue to experience marked and widespread disadvantage. This is shown most fundamentally by the 20 year gap in average life expectancy between Indigenous and other Australians.

The commissioning of this Report by the Council of Australian Governments demonstrates a new resolve, at the highest political level, not only to tackle the root causes of Indigenous disadvantage, but also to monitor the outcomes in a systematic way that crosses jurisdictional and portfolio boundaries. In so doing, the Report also raises the transparency of governments' performance.

This Report, therefore, is more than just another collection of data. It documents outcomes for Indigenous people within a framework that has both a vision of what should be for Indigenous people and a strategic focus on key areas that need to be targeted if that longer term vision is to be realised.

The strategic framework that distinguishes this Report had its genesis in work undertaken by the Ministerial Council for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs. It has evolved considerably as a result of widespread consultations across the country, particularly with Indigenous people and organisations.

Implicit in the framework is recognition of the need to account for the diversity of Indigenous people and their circumstances. It is apparent that data collections will need to be improved to realise this. In some key areas, such as disability, very little data are available at all. There is also recognition that some central factors, such as culture and governance, are inherently difficult to quantify but remain important to document. In such respects, this first Report in the series needs to be seen as a work in progress, one which will benefit from further feedback and consultation.

FOREWORD

During our consultations, we learned of many initiatives that were making a difference at the community level. However, progress at this level may not be evident in aggregate statistics. Such initiatives underline the importance of governments' contribution, but they also show that other ingredients are needed. As one Indigenous leader has publicly declared, "man cannot live by service delivery alone". Contributions from the private sector and, not least, Indigenous people themselves, will also be important to overcoming Indigenous disadvantage.

On behalf of the Steering Committee, I should like to record my appreciation for the spirit of cooperation and commitment displayed by all those involved in the preparation of this Report. That includes in particular the many Indigenous people who gave freely of their time and opinions to help ensure the utility of the reporting framework.

Gary Banks
Chairman

November 2003

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PRIME MINISTER

CANBERRA

3 MAY 2002

Mr Gary Banks
Chairman
Steering Committee for the
Review of Commonwealth/State Service Provision
C/- Productivity Commission
Locked Bag 2
Collins Street East Post Office
MELBOURNE VIC 8003

Dear Mr Banks

I am writing in my capacity as Chairman of the Council of Australian Governments (COAG). As you would be aware, COAG met on 5 April 2002 and agreed to undertake further work to advance reconciliation. A copy of the communique from the recent COAG meeting is attached for your information.

COAG agreed to commission the Steering Committee for the Review of Commonwealth/State Service Provision (SCRCSSP) to produce a regular report to COAG against key indicators of indigenous disadvantage. The key task will be to identify indicators that are of relevance to all governments and indigenous stakeholders and that can demonstrate the impact of programme and policy interventions.

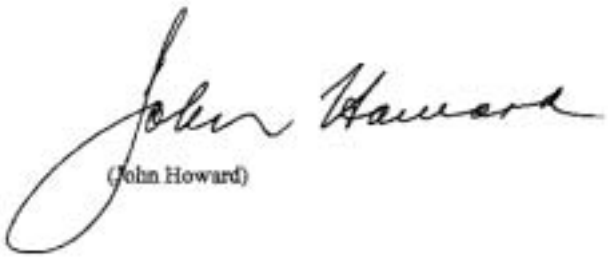
The development of the indicators will be progressed in the first instance through discussions at officials level between COAG, the Ministerial Council for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs (MCATSIA) and the SCRCSSP. I understand that the SCRCSSP proposed at its recent meeting to progress this matter through a working group that will include representatives of the COAG senior officials working group on reconciliation and MCATSIA officials. Such an approach is consistent with the COAG decision.

In May 1997, I wrote to your predecessor, Mr Bill Scales, requesting that the SCRCSSP give particular attention to improving indigenous data. The development of the new COAG reconciliation report should not reduce the emphasis on indigenous data that is now a feature of the annual Report on Government Services. This emphasis has helped ensure that indigenous data in mainstream and targeted programmes are as comprehensive and comparable as possible.

I would appreciate further advice from you when the SCRCSSP has completed its work in developing a proposal for the report against indicators of indigenous disadvantage so that COAG members may consider the detail of the proposed approach.

I have copied this letter to the Chairman of MCATSIA and New South Wales Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, the Hon Dr Andrew Refshauge, and to the Minister for Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs, the Hon Philip Ruddock MP.

Yours sincerely



(John Howard)

PRIME MINISTER
CANBERRA

22 AUG 2003

Mr Gary Banks
Chairman
Steering Committee for the Review of Commonwealth
and State Service Provision
C/- Productivity Commission
Locked Bag 2
Collins Street East Post Office
MELBOURNE VIC 8003

Dear Mr Banks

I am writing in my capacity as Chairman of the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) to formally endorse the framework for reporting against key indicators of indigenous disadvantage.

The framework will provide relevant and meaningful indicators that can demonstrate the impact of government policies and programmes on outcomes for indigenous people. I commend the Steering Committee for the Review of Commonwealth and State Service Provision for its excellent work on this important project.

Yours sincerely

(John Howard)

Overview

This Report has been prepared at the request of the Council of Australian Governments. Its key task is to provide indicators of Indigenous disadvantage 'that are of relevance to all governments and Indigenous stakeholders, and that can demonstrate the impact of programme and policy interventions' (see pp. iv-v).

Why another report?

A vast amount of information has already been gathered on Indigenous Australians by a range of people and organisations. Some may therefore ask – do we really need another report, and what makes this one different?

Driving this Report is a commitment by Australian governments at the highest level to reducing Indigenous disadvantage. Behind the Report is the vision of an Australia in which Indigenous people come to enjoy the same overall standard of living as other Australians — that they are as healthy, live as long and are as able to participate in the social and economic life of the nation.

This means that this Report must be more than a collection of data – it provides policy makers with a broad view of the current state of Indigenous disadvantage and where things need to change if the vision is to be realised.

Important role of consultations

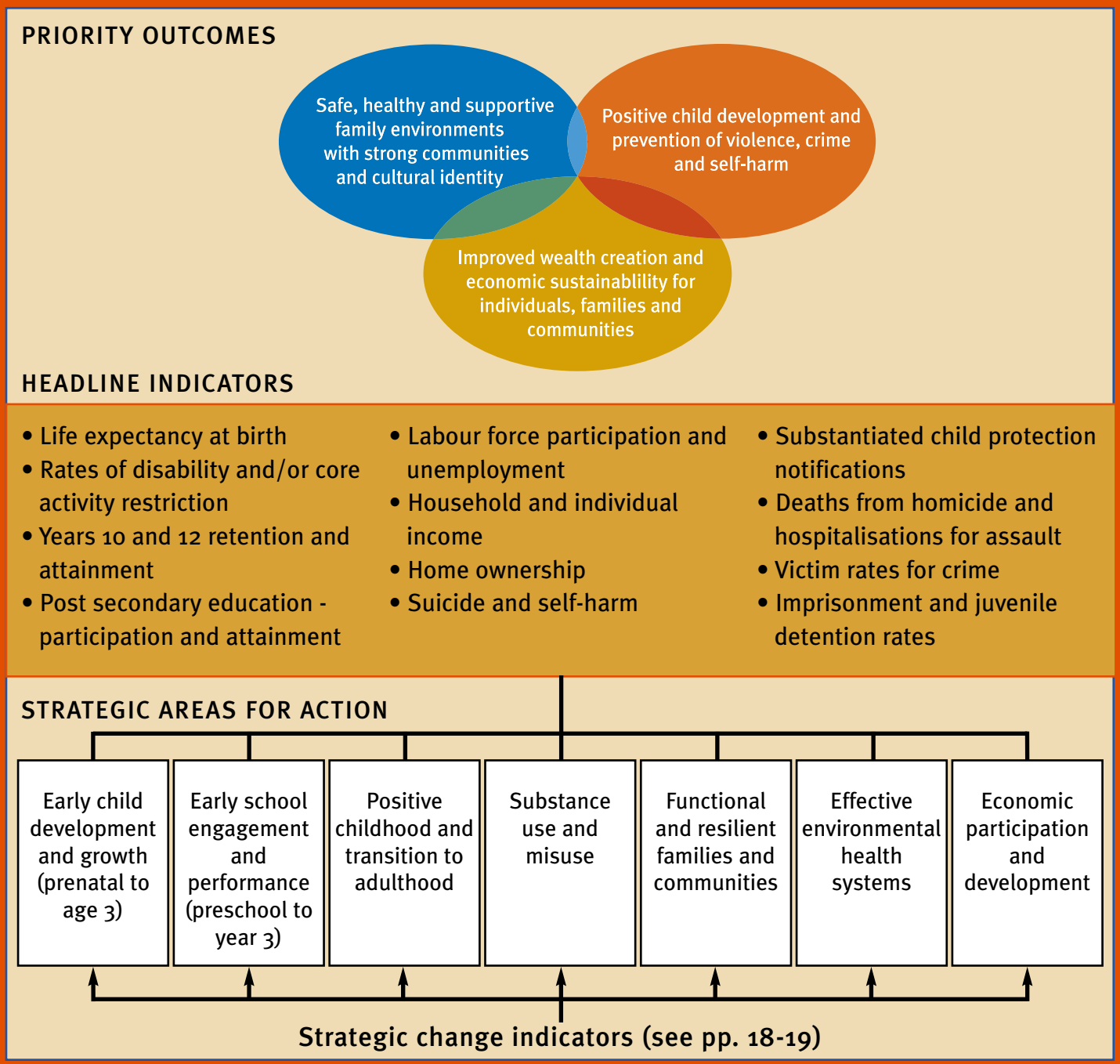
The reporting framework had its genesis in work undertaken by the Ministerial Council for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs. In developing further the framework and indicators, public consultations had a vitally important role to play. The report has benefited greatly from the feedback of many people within government and the wider community, and particularly from Indigenous people and their organisations. (A list of those consulted is in appendix 2 of the main Report.)

This first Report nevertheless remains a work in progress. Further consultations will be undertaken, including with Indigenous people, to ensure that it can improve over time, as well as maintain its currency and relevance.

The reporting framework

The Report's indicator framework is depicted in figure 1. Three priority outcomes sit at the top of this framework. They reflect a vision for how life should be for Indigenous people that is shared by governments and Indigenous people alike. The outcomes are linked and should not be viewed in isolation from each other.

Figure 1: The framework



Sitting beneath the priority outcomes are two tiers of indicators. The goal is that improvements in these will, in time, make it possible to overcome the sources of disadvantage which currently lead the circumstances of many Indigenous people and communities to fall short of the priority outcomes.

Headline indicators

The first tier (or 'headline indicators') provides an overview of the state of Indigenous disadvantage. These indicators are measures of the major social and economic factors that need to improve if the vision is to be achieved. But because these measures (for example, life expectancy) are at such a high level, they do not provide a sufficient focus for policy makers to act on.

In some respects, reporting just at the headline level could create the perception that the task is too big to handle. The problems observed at this level come at the end of a chain of other factors which may be of long-standing (for example, birthweight, diet and school attendance). No single government agency is, therefore, responsible for creating the policies and programs which will make for overall improvements. That is why COAG has sought a whole of government approach to meeting the needs of Indigenous people.

Strategic areas for action

At the second tier of the framework, there are seven 'strategic areas for action'. They have been chosen for their potential to have a significant and lasting impact in reducing Indigenous disadvantage and for their amenability to policy action.

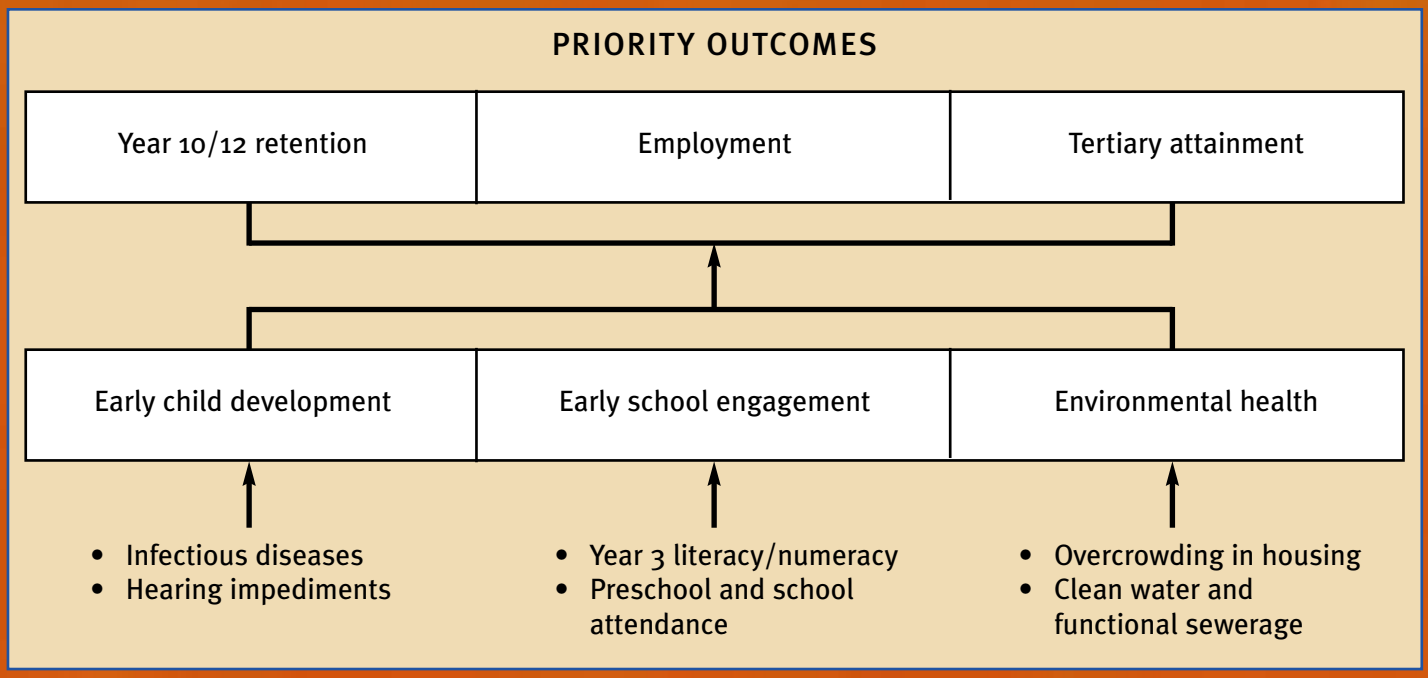
They assist policy makers to address the *causes* of disadvantage so that, over time, improvements in the headline indicators and priority outcomes will be achieved. For example, a focus by governments on improving outcomes in the area of 'Early Child development' has the potential to improve such headline indicators as 'years 10 and 12 retention' and 'employment'. While it may take some time for improvement in the strategic areas to show up in the headline indicators, they serve as intermediate measures of progress. The diagram at figure 2 provides an illustration of the connections.

Strategic change indicators

For each of the strategic areas for action, a few key indicators have been developed with their potential to be affected by government policies and programs in mind (see pp. 18-19). However, the indicators are linked to actual outcomes for Indigenous people, not the operations of specific policy programs.

The framework is based on the idea that individual agencies in every government will need to look at their capacity to contribute to improving outcomes in these indicators. Take for example the strategic change indicator, 'year 3 literacy and numeracy'. The school system is not solely responsible for improvements in this area. Early school engagement is also affected by many factors outside the education system, including transport availability, housing arrangements, health and (outside of the service system) parental support.

Figure 2: Multi-causality of outcomes for Indigenous people



Data limitations

The data for this Report have been drawn from three types of sources – census, survey and administrative data. Each has strengths and weaknesses. Analysis of information compiled from each of these sources needs to be taken into account. Particular limitations arise from variability in the identification of people as being of Indigenous origin, both across collections and over time. Relevant factors are whether people are asked or choose to identify themselves as Indigenous, and the restriction of administrative data sets generally to people interacting with the administrative process from which those data are drawn. The data in this Report are the most recent available, and generally reflect the frequency of the data collections.

Headline indicators

The first part of the Report focuses on the headline indicators – the measures of the major social and economic factors that need to improve if COAG's vision for a better standard of living for Indigenous people is to become a reality. The headline indicators are set out below.

HEADLINE INDICATORS

- Life expectancy at birth
- Rates of disability and/or core activity restriction
- Years 10 and 12 retention and attainment
- Post secondary education – participation and attainment
- Labour force participation and unemployment
- Household and individual income
- Home ownership
- Suicide and self-harm
- Substantiated child protection notifications
- Deaths from homicide and hospitalisations for assault
- Victim rates for crime
- Imprisonment and juvenile detention rates

Some key messages arising out of the data in each area are also included, with references to where more information can be found in the main Report.

LIFE EXPECTANCY AT BIRTH

The life expectancy of Indigenous people is currently 20 years less than other Australians.

This indicator refers to the average number of years a person could expect to live if there were no change to the population's death rates throughout his or her lifetime. In other words, a reduction in the current age specific death rates would result in an improvement in life expectancy

Better outcomes in such strategic action areas as 'Early child development and growth', 'Substance use and misuse', 'Effective environmental health systems', and 'Economic participation and development', could lead to improvements in the life expectancy of Indigenous people.

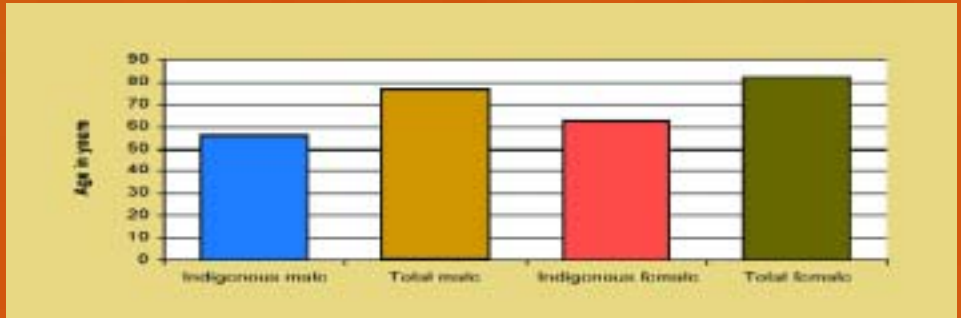
KEY MESSAGE

- **The life expectancy of Indigenous people is around 20 years lower than that for the total Australian population (figure 3.1.1).**

The consumption of tobacco and excessive alcohol, poor nutrition and lack of exercise can all influence life expectancy.

Environmental factors can also play a significant role. For example, lack of clean drinking water or inadequate sanitation can increase health risks, particularly for infants and young children. Other factors are overcrowding of housing, and access to health professionals. Life expectancy can also be influenced by differences in income and education levels. People from lower socioeconomic groups tend to suffer higher rates of ill health and premature death.

Life expectancy at birth, three year rolling average, 1999–2001 [a, b]



[a] Indigenous data are for the Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population, and include an adjustment for undercoverage of Indigenous deaths. [b] Indigenous life expectancy excludes Tasmania and the ACT (figure 3.1.1).

RATES OF DISABILITY AND/OR CORE ACTIVITY RESTRICTION

Research suggests that although Indigenous people have similar rates of genetic disability to the rest of the population, they have a higher rate of disability resulting from environmental and trauma-related factors. Unfortunately, only very limited data are available on the prevalence of disability amongst Indigenous people.

Frequently cited predisposing factors include:

- diabetes combined with failure to access early treatment;
- ongoing infectious diseases (for example, otitis media – especially among young children);
- accidents and violence;
- mental health problems; and
- substance abuse.

KEY MESSAGES

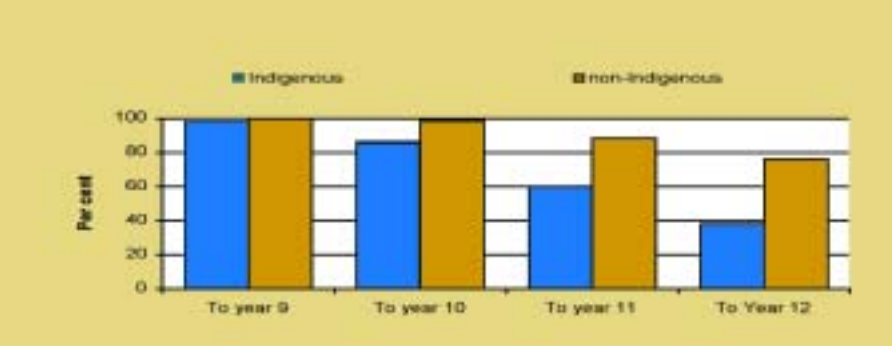
- **Nationally comparable data on the prevalence of disability within the Indigenous population are currently not available (section 3.2).**
- **The Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) new Indigenous Social Survey will provide some data, but only every six years. However the ABS is also investigating the possibility of including a question on disability in the 2006 Census.**

Years 10 and 12 retention and attainment

Lack of formal education and training has a big impact on employment options. This can lead to unskilled, low income jobs or welfare dependency.

Retaining students from year 10 is essential to achieving successful completion of year 12, which in turn is a crucial element in proceeding to post secondary education and gaining better paid employment.

Apparent retention rates of full time school students, all schools, 2002 [a, b]



a Part time students and ungraded students are not included in the calculation of apparent retention rates.
b See notes to table 3A.3.2 for more detail.
Source: ABS, Schools Australia 2003, Cat. no. 4221.0, Canberra; figure 3.3.1.

Over the period 1998 to 2002, apparent retention rates for Indigenous students to year 10, and particularly to years 11 and 12, have been below the rates for non-Indigenous students.

KEY MESSAGES

- Indigenous students have a tendency to leave school once they reach the age when attendance is no longer compulsory (section 3.3).
- Nationally in 2002, non-Indigenous students were twice as likely to continue to year 12 as Indigenous students (figure 3.3.3).
- From 1998 to 2002, Indigenous apparent retention rates increased slightly (figure 3.3.1).

Post secondary education – participation and attainment

Post secondary study can significantly improve a person's employment prospects. This indicator examines participation at universities, as well as technical and further education (TAFE) institutes. However, participation in itself need not lead to improved employment outcomes. It generally needs to be accompanied by success – the attainment of a qualification or completion of a course of study.

Positive outcomes in virtually all of the strategic areas for action could contribute to better Indigenous educational achievement.

KEY MESSAGES

- While TAFE participation among Indigenous people in 2001 was typically higher than for the rest of the population, university attendance was lower, with other Australians being 1.8 times more likely to attend university than Indigenous people (figure 3.4.1).
- Indigenous post secondary attainment in 2001 was significantly lower, with 12.5 per cent of Indigenous people having attained a level 3 certificate or above, compared to 33.5 per cent of non-Indigenous people (figure 3.4.3).

At university, Indigenous students are more likely to undertake enabling and non-award courses than non-Indigenous students, and less likely to be enrolled in post-graduate courses.

Labour force participation and unemployment

Having a job is important to wellbeing, particularly in terms of remuneration and opportunity for self development and social interaction.

Groups with characteristics in low demand (for example, low levels of educational attainment, limited relevant work experience, or poor health) are likely to find it more difficult to secure a job.

The labour force participation rate for Indigenous people will, to some extent, reflect the limited employment opportunities available to Indigenous people in remote areas, along with the employment opportunities provided by CDEP (that is, employment may be higher in areas where there are CDEP opportunities).

KEY MESSAGES

- **Labour force participation for Indigenous people in 2001 was 50.4 per cent of the population aged 15 years and over, compared to 62.6 per cent for non-Indigenous people (table 3.5.2).**
- **Unemployment in 2001 was 2.8 times higher for Indigenous than for non-Indigenous people (table 3.5.3).**
- **CDEP participation significantly reduces recorded Indigenous unemployment rates (section 11.3).**

There are links between unemployment and various dimensions of people's wellbeing. For example, studies generally suggest that unemployment can be a factor contributing to crime, poorer health, higher risks of poverty and lower levels of social attachment. Policy interventions within the relevant strategic areas for action have the potential to improve these characteristics. In time, these improvements should lead to increased employment for Indigenous people.

WHAT IS MEANT BY 'LABOUR FORCE'?

The labour force refers to the number of people contributing to, or actively seeking to contribute to, the supply of labour and comprises two groups:

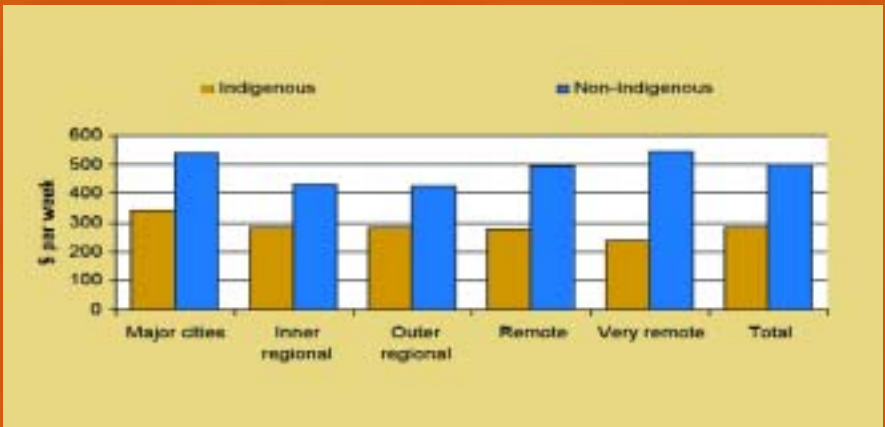
- the employed (people who have worked for at least one hour in the reference week – including CDEP); and
- the unemployed (people who are without work, but are actively looking for work and available to start within four weeks).

Household and individual income

The economic wellbeing of individuals is largely determined by their income and wealth. In the absence of data on wealth, the extent to which income for Indigenous people is lower than for non-Indigenous people is a major indicator of material disadvantage.

Income may be derived from employment, assets and welfare. While income is usually received by individuals, it is normally shared between partners in a couple relationship and with dependent children. In some situations, there may also be sharing with other members of a household.

Household income, 2001[a]



[a] *Refers to median gross weekly equivalised household income.*

Source: ABS 2001 Census; figure 3.6.2.

The average income of Indigenous people is significantly below that of non-Indigenous people. All of the strategic areas for action are relevant to addressing this income differential.

KEY MESSAGE

- **In 2001, both household and individual incomes were lower on average for Indigenous than non-Indigenous people across all regions, and they are much lower in remote locations (section 3.6).**

Home ownership

Home ownership is an important indicator of wealth and saving, and is likely to be positively related to employment and income. Home ownership provides a secure asset base that can contribute to financial stability and against which people can borrow.

During the consultation process for this Report, many Indigenous people stressed the importance of home ownership in overcoming disadvantage. Improvements in the strategic areas for action, particularly those relating to education and economic participation and development, could increase the level of Indigenous home ownership in the future.

KEY MESSAGE

- **Indigenous individual home ownership rates in 2001 were much lower than those for non-Indigenous people in all regions (section 3.7).**

Home ownership is significantly lower among Indigenous people than among non-Indigenous people. In 2001, 31.9 per cent of Indigenous households owned or were buying their own homes, compared with nearly 69.5 per cent of non-Indigenous households.

The proportion of those actually owning their own homes (no mortgage) was around 41.4 per cent for non-Indigenous households compared to 12.6 per cent of Indigenous households.

Two factors (among others) contribute to the difference in home ownership rates. First, the age profile of the Indigenous population is younger (home ownership increases with age). Second, in remote areas, a significant number of Indigenous people live on communally owned or controlled land. While this means the ongoing ownership of the land by Indigenous people is assured, it usually precludes the sale of land for housing and restricts the capacity to borrow.

Suicide and self-harm

Suicide death rates are significantly higher in the Indigenous population (particularly for young Indigenous males) than in the rest of the population.

The 1991 Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody found that those Indigenous people most at risk of suicide were the young, those affected by alcohol and those confined alone in custody. Substance abuse, such as excessive alcohol consumption, has also been identified as a contributing factor in self-harm.

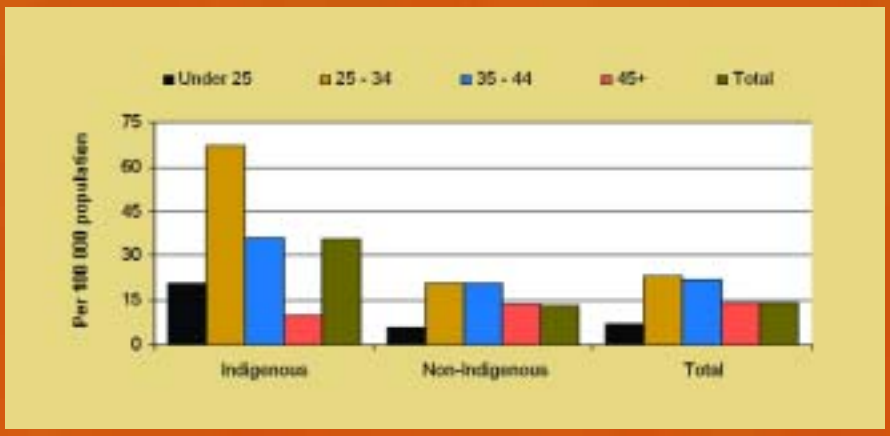
Other risk factors are unemployment and poor long-term job prospects, particularly in rural and remote areas. A 1993 study showed that broad movements in (all) male suicide deaths broadly corresponded with periods of economic downturn and high unemployment rates. The implications are greater for Indigenous people, for whom unemployment is generally persistently higher.

KEY MESSAGES

- **In 2001, the suicide rate for Indigenous people (35.5 per 100 000) was considerably higher than the rate for other Australians (13.1 per 100 000) (based on Queensland, WA, SA and the NT) (figure 3.8, below).**
- **Suicide death rates for the Indigenous population were particularly high in the 25-34 year age group (67.2 per 100 000) (figure 3.8.2).**

Policy action across a range of strategic areas may be needed to bring about improvements in the circumstances that lead to suicide and self-harm, particularly for young people.

Suicide death rate across four jurisdictions 2001 [a,b]



[a] Only Queensland, WA, SA and the NT data are included. [b] The rates are presented as per 100 000 population. For Indigenous population, the rates would be as per 100 000 Indigenous population, and for non-Indigenous population the rates would be as per 100 000 non-Indigenous population.

Source: ABS (unpublished); figure 3.8.2.

Substantiated child protection notifications

Information on substantiated child protection notifications provides an insight into the extent of abuse, neglect and/or harm to children in the family environment.

Child abuse and neglect are often associated with complex social and personal factors, including the mental health of care givers, substance abuse and violence within the family, overcrowded living conditions, unemployment and lack of access to health care and education.

KEY MESSAGES

- **In most jurisdictions, the substantiation rate for Indigenous children was higher than for non-Indigenous children in 2001-02 (table 3.9.1).**
- **In 2001-02, the p*attern* of substantiated abuse and neglect for Indigenous and non-Indigenous children appears to differ (with most non-Indigenous cases related to abuse and most Indigenous cases related to neglect) (table 3.9.2).**
- **Particular care should be taken in interpreting substantiation data. The data collected by community service departments may under-estimate the true extent of abuse or neglect occurring within the community (section 3.9).**

Children who come into contact with community services for protective reasons include:

- those who are abused, neglected or otherwise harmed; and
- those whose parents cannot provide adequate care or protection.

Deaths from homicide and hospitalisations for assault

Although Indigenous people account for only 2.4 per cent of the population, they represented around 15 per cent of all homicide victims and around 16 per cent of all homicide offenders (in the period 1989 to 2000).

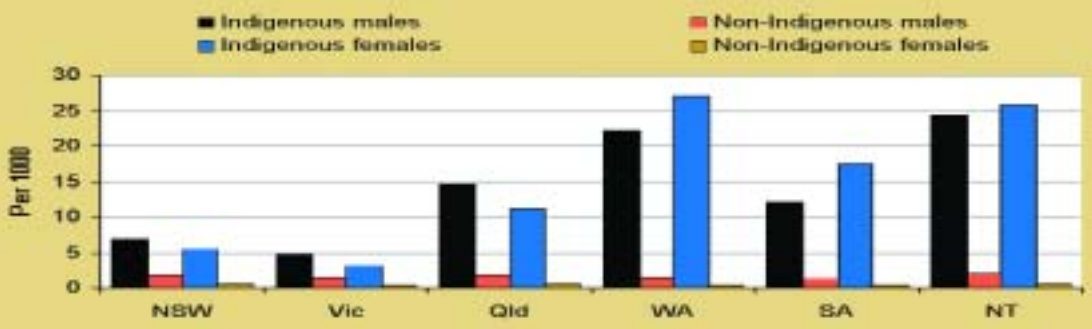
The impact of homicide and hospitalisations for assault extends beyond the offender and immediate victim. Although not reflected in the statistics, families are severely affected, as are the communities in which they live.

KEY MESSAGES

- During 1999–2001, homicides, as a proportion of total deaths, were far greater in the Indigenous population — 2.1 per cent compared with 0.2 per cent in the non-Indigenous population (figure 3.10.1).
- Hospital separation rates for assault in 2001-02 were higher for Indigenous people (13.3 per 1000) than non-Indigenous people (1.0 per 1000). The main category was assault by bodily force (table 3A.10.6).

Substance abuse is a key factor in homicides and assaults. A much larger share of Indigenous homicides involved both the victim and offender having consumed alcohol at the time of the offence, compared with non-Indigenous homicides. In a less direct way, actions in other strategic areas for action also have the potential to make a difference, by addressing the socioeconomic circumstances which can lead to violent behaviour – for example, improvements in 'Economic participation and development'.

Hospital separation rates for non-fatal assault 2001-02 [a,b,c,d,e]



[a] Non-fatal refers to records where the mode of separation was not equal to 'died'. [b] Data are based on jurisdiction of usual residence. [c] Rates are as per 1000 population and were directly age standardised to the Australian population as at 30 June 2001. [d] Data are based on the ICD-10-AM. [e] Hospital separation is the discharge, transfer, death or change of episode of care of an admitted patient (see glossary for a detailed definition).

Source: AIHW (unpublished): figure 3.10.2.

Victim rates for crime

Violence and criminal behaviour have direct implications for health outcomes and safety, as well as having a negative influence on child development.

Socioeconomic factors are critical determinants of crime. Often the focus of socioeconomic considerations has been their influence on criminal offenders. But these factors are just as important when it comes to victims of crime. The Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody acknowledged that low education and income levels, crowded housing, and unemployment are just a few of the factors that lead to an over-representation of Indigenous people 'as both perpetrators and victims' of crime.

Domestic violence and substance misuse, in particular, are critical issues in Indigenous families and communities and may contribute to increased rates of victimisation.

KEY MESSAGES

- On the limited data available, Indigenous people were much more likely to be victims of murder, assault, sexual assault and domestic violence than non-Indigenous people in 2000 and 2002 (tables 3.11.1 and 3.11.2).
- Of all the offences examined, robbery was the only one which showed victimisation rates to be lower for Indigenous people in 2000 and 2002 (table 3.11.1 and 3.11.2).

Imprisonment and juvenile detention rates

Over-representation of Indigenous people in the criminal justice system is of long standing. Many factors outside the system create the conditions which result in incarceration. Actions from 'Early child development and growth' onwards have the capacity to improve outcomes in Indigenous imprisonment and juvenile detention rates.

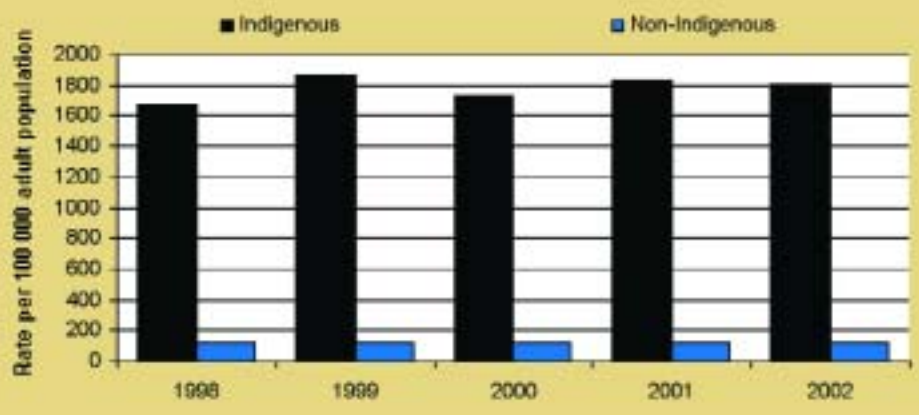
KEY MESSAGES

- On 30 June 2002, Indigenous people were some 15 times more likely than non-Indigenous people to be in prison (figure 3.12.1 [below]).
- On 30 June 2002, around one quarter of all sentenced Indigenous prisoners had assault as their most serious offence (figure 3.12.3).
- The rate of juvenile detention has declined over the last five years (although on 30 June 2002, it was still higher for Indigenous people as a whole) (figure 3.12.4).
- Indigenous juveniles were still 19 times more likely to be detained than non-Indigenous juveniles on 30 June 2002 (figure 3.12.4).

Imprisonment and juvenile detention rates provide an insight into the level of involvement of Indigenous people in the justice system. This, however, is only one aspect of possible involvement. The data exclude:

- arrests that do not proceed to court (for example, as a result of diversion or restitution); and
- convictions that lead to outcomes that are not administered by prisons (for example, community service orders).

Rate of imprisonment at 30 June each year



Source: ABS (2003); figure 3.12.1.

Strategic areas for action

This second part of the Report focuses on the strategic areas for action and provides information on the strategic change indicators. These have been chosen for their potential to have a significant and lasting impact in reducing Indigenous disadvantage. Some key messages arising out of the data in each area are also included, with references to where more information can be found in the main Report.

STRATEGIC AREAS FOR ACTION	STRATEGIC CHANGE INDICATORS
Early child development and growth (prenatal to age 3)	• Rates of hospital admission for infectious diseases • Infant mortality • Birthweight • Hearing impediments
Early school engagement and performance (preschool to year 3)	• Preschool and school attendance • Year 3 literacy and numeracy • Primary school children with dental caries
Positive childhood and transition to adulthood	• Years 5 and 7 literacy and numeracy • Retention at year 9 • Indigenous cultural studies in school curriculum and involvement of Indigenous people in development and delivery of Indigenous studies • Participation in organised sport, arts or community group activities • Juvenile diversions as a proportion of all juvenile offenders • Transition from school to work

STRATEGIC AREAS FOR ACTION	STRATEGIC CHANGE INDICATORS
Substance use and misuse	• Alcohol and tobacco consumption • Alcohol related crime and hospital statistics • Drug and other substance use
Functional and resilient families and communities	• Children on long term care and protection orders • Repeat offending • Access to the nearest health professional • Proportion of indigenous people with access to their traditional lands
Effective environmental health systems	• Rates of diseases associated with poor environmental health (including water and food borne diseases, trachoma, tuberculosis and rheumatic heart disease) • Access to clean water and functional sewerage • Overcrowding in housing
Economic participation and development	• Employment (full-time/part-time) by sector (public/private), industry and occupation • CDEP participation • Long term unemployment • Self employment • Indigenous owned or controlled land • Accredited training in leadership, finance or management • Case studies in governance arrangements

Early child development and growth (prenatal to age 3)

Health and educational outcomes in later life are greatly influenced by the health, growth and development of children in their first three years of life. A wide range of social, cultural, physical and economic factors influence the health of children.

The four indicators in this section have been shown to be of particular relevance to Indigenous people. Policy actions leading to improvements in these areas have the capacity to change the lives of Indigenous people for the better in the long term.

Rates of hospital admission for infectious diseases

This indicator examines a range of infectious diseases experienced by children that result in them being admitted to hospital. Most childhood diseases are generally successfully treated or prevented.

KEY MESSAGE

- **In 2001-02, the rate of hospitalisation of Indigenous children aged four years and under for infectious diseases (115.4 per 1000) was more than double the rate for non-Indigenous children (48.0 per 1000) (table 5.1.1).**

Infant mortality

The survival of infants in their first year of life is commonly viewed to be a key indicator of the general health and wellbeing of a population.

There has been a dramatic decline in infant mortality rates in the past century, with Australia having amongst the lowest in the world in 2001. However, the Indigenous infant mortality rate is still more than twice that of all Australians.

KEY MESSAGE

- **The Indigenous infant mortality rate during 1999–2001, at 12.7 per 1000 live births, was more than double that for all Australians (table 5.2.1).**

Birthweight

Infants with a low birthweight are more likely to die or have health difficulties early in life. Low birthweight may also have an influence on the development of chronic diseases in adulthood, including diabetes.

The birthweight data used in this Report relate only to babies born to Indigenous mothers (and not to the babies born of non-Indigenous mothers and Indigenous fathers).

KEY MESSAGE

- The proportion of live births during 1998–2000 with low birthweight was almost twice as high for Indigenous than for non-Indigenous mothers (11.9 per cent compared with 6.0 per cent) (table 5.3.2).

Hearing impediments

The true burden of hearing loss on Indigenous people is unclear. However, studies on hearing loss and ear infections amongst the Indigenous population suggest that hearing impediments can have a substantial impact on the future of Indigenous children.

Otitis media (or middle ear infection) is the main cause of hearing problems faced by Indigenous children. Repeated infections in early childhood can lead to ongoing hearing problems and future learning difficulties at school.

KEY MESSAGES

- Due to data deficiencies, particularly for the age category 0–3 years, it is difficult to assess nationally the level of ear infections and the extent of hearing loss across Indigenous and non-Indigenous populations (section 5.4).
- In 2001, an estimated 9 per cent of Indigenous children aged 0-4 years suffered from long-term diseases of the ear and mastoid, compared with 4 per cent for non-Indigenous children (section 5.4).
- In 2001-02, hospital admissions for suppurative and unspecified otitis media were significantly higher for Indigenous children aged 0-3 (6.1 per 1000) than non-Indigenous children aged 0-3 (4.2 per 1000) (table 5.4.2).

Early school engagement and performance (preschool to year 3)

The extent to which Indigenous children begin formal learning at an early age, attend school regularly, and are safe, healthy and supported by their families and communities, all have a bearing on educational outcomes.

Research shows that the children most likely to have learning difficulties often have nutritional, hearing, or other health problems. Poor dental health can cause impaired speech and language development.

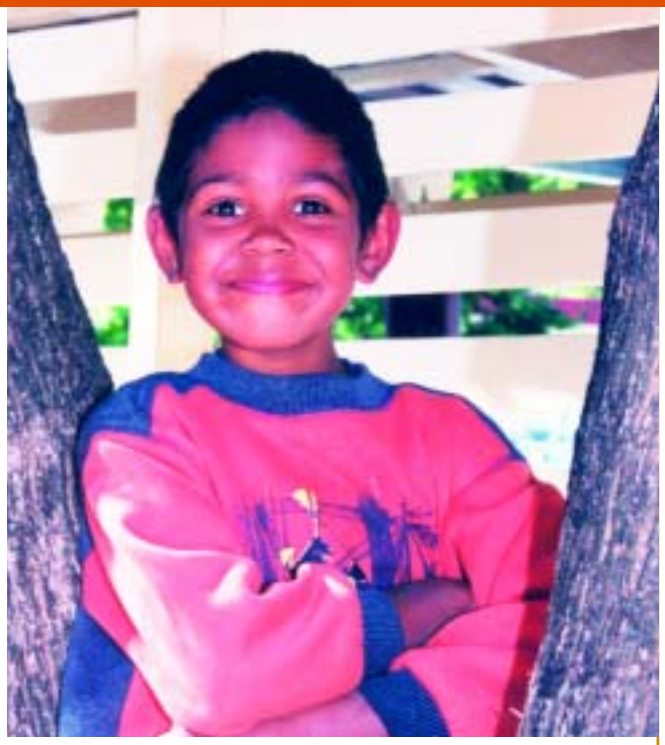
Preschool and school attendance

Early participation in education provides young children with opportunities to develop socially and may also have a significant bearing on their future educational performance.

A threshold issue in improving Indigenous learning outcomes is attendance. Unfortunately, it was not possible to obtain attendance data for preschool and year 1-3 school students. Participation rates (that is the number of children enrolled expressed as a proportion of the relevant population group) are only a weak proxy measure. (They do not account for rates of absenteeism or other non-attendance).

KEY MESSAGE

- **In 2002, the early school participation rate was lower for Indigenous children than for other children (figure 6.1.1).**



Year 3 literacy and numeracy

The level of achievement in the early years of schooling has major implications for retention and attainment in later years. Children who have already fallen behind in year 3 are less likely to remain at school beyond the compulsory age. This in turn has implications for employment options and disadvantage in the long-term.

KEY MESSAGE

- Indigenous primary school students in 2001 had significantly lower literacy and numeracy achievement than non-Indigenous students (section 6.2).

Primary school children with dental caries

Decayed teeth can cause illness and pain, potentially detracting from school attendance and performance. The loss of permanent teeth can lead to eating difficulties as well as stress and social isolation.

KEY MESSAGES

- The proportion of children in 1999 in need of immediate dental care, with five or more decayed teeth, was higher for Indigenous than non-Indigenous children for all ages between 4 and 12 years (figure 6.3.1).
- A large proportion of these Indigenous children live in remote areas of Australia (section 6.3).

Positive childhood and transition to adulthood

The later years of childhood, adolescence and the transition to adulthood are important phases, which build on early child development and education.

The indicators in this section cover a range of factors with the potential to improve long term outcomes for Indigenous people. They reflect the continuing importance of educational outcomes for young people and their futures, of participation in organised sport, art and community group activities, and finding alternatives to detention for juvenile offenders.

Years 5 and 7 literacy and numeracy

Achievement in literacy and numeracy in the earlier years of schooling has a direct influence on options and choices in years 11 and 12. This in turn can have an impact on future education and employment possibilities. Low achievement in the early years also increases the likelihood that a student may withdraw prematurely from school.

KEY MESSAGE

- **In 2001, the proportion of Indigenous students who achieved the year 5 reading, writing and numeracy benchmarks was significantly lower than that for all students (section 7.1).**

Retention at year 9

Generally, compulsory schooling begins at age 5 and ends at age 15. For most students, therefore, compulsory schooling ends in years 9 or 10.

Consultations with Indigenous people suggested that year 9 was a critical time for Indigenous children dropping out of school. Although the data in this section suggest only a two per cent gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous students, data are collected in August and do not reflect the number of children who failed to complete the year.

KEY MESSAGES

- Over the period 1998 to 2002, Indigenous apparent retention rates to year 9 increased (figure 3.3.1).
- The two percentage points gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous students at year 9 does not reflect the number of children who did not complete the year (table 3A.3.2).
- In 2002, there was a significant decrease in apparent retention rates from year 9 to year 10 for Indigenous students (figure 3.3.1).

Indigenous studies in school curriculum and involvement of Indigenous people in their development and delivery

Indigenous people and others have argued that including Indigenous cultural studies in a school's curriculum would be beneficial for Indigenous and non-Indigenous students alike. Approaches to incorporating Indigenous content into the curriculum vary widely both among education systems and schools.

KEY MESSAGES

- Data are limited, but in 2001 it appeared that Indigenous teachers and education workers generally comprised a much smaller proportion of school staff than Indigenous students comprised of all students (section 7.3).
- Several schools with significant proportions of Indigenous students have incorporated Indigenous languages and cultural activities into their curricula (section 7.3).

Participation in organised sport, arts or community group activities

Taking part in organised sport, arts or community group activities can enhance self esteem and the development of social and other skills, and teamwork.

There are currently no national data on the participation of Indigenous youth in these activities. Some descriptive information is available about individual community programs that have been in operation. However, this information mainly relates to participation and intended outcomes.

KEY MESSAGE

- **A wide range of community programs exist, but there are no national data on the participation of Indigenous youth in these programs or on the associated outcomes, although the ABS ISS when it is released will contain some information (section 7.4).**

Juvenile 'diversions'

When police apprehend offenders, they have two options (depending on the severity of the offence). The offender can be charged, in which case criminal proceedings occur through the traditional court processes. Alternatively, the offender may be 'diverted'. Diversionary mechanisms range from cautions to attendance at community and family conferences.

Unfortunately, there are no national data on the extent of juvenile diversions. This section of the Report presents (non-comparable) data from NSW, WA and the NT.

KEY MESSAGE

- **The importance of diversions in Indigenous juvenile justice outcomes necessitates the collection of better data (section 7.5).**

Transition from school to work

Two approaches are used to analyse the important transition from school to work. The first is the 'at risk' approach, which examines the proportion of people aged 15-24 who are not in full or part time employment, nor engaged in study. These people are considered to be 'at risk' of long-term disadvantage. The second approach looks at outcomes from education.

KEY MESSAGES

- In 2001, Indigenous people aged 15-24 were much more likely to be 'at risk' of long term disadvantage than their non-Indigenous counterparts, as they were less likely to have a job or to be in school (section 7.6).
- An educational attainment of certificate level 3 or above significantly reduced an Indigenous person's chance of being unemployed in 2001 (table 7.6.1).

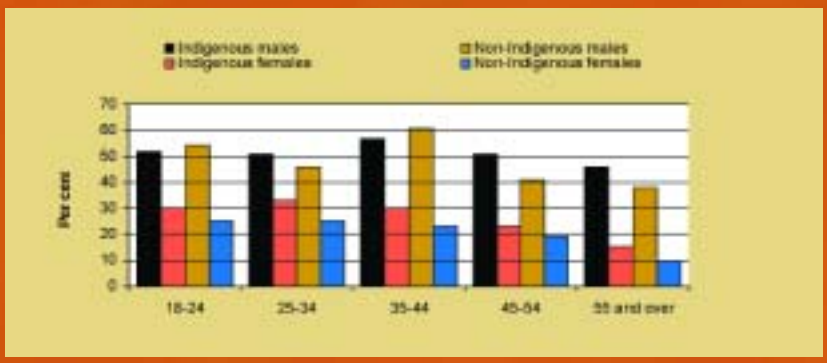
Substance use and misuse

Substance use and, particularly, misuse have the capacity to impact on every aspect of a person's life. Life expectancy, disability, employment, income, imprisonment, domestic violence and sexual abuse are all headline indicators affected by substance use and misuse. According to some studies, cigarette smoking, excessive alcohol consumption and illicit drug use are particularly prevalent in lower socioeconomic groups. The relative socioeconomic disadvantage experienced by Indigenous people may place them at greater risk than the rest of the population.

Alcohol and tobacco consumption

Cigarette smoking and excessive alcohol consumption are associated with increased illness and mortality. High levels of alcohol consumption can lead to diseases such as alcohol dependence syndrome and alcohol cirrhosis; in the case of pregnant women, it can also adversely affect the health of new born infants.

Current smokers 18 years and over, 2001



Source: ABS (2002); figure 8.1.1.

KEY MESSAGES

- In 2001, Indigenous people were more than twice as likely as other Australians to be regular smokers (table 8.1.1).
- Nationally, in 2001 there was little difference between the proportion of Indigenous and non-Indigenous people consuming alcohol at the low risk (or no alcohol) level (table 8.1.1).
- In 2001, a slightly greater proportion of Indigenous people (7 per cent) was considered to consume alcohol at a high risk level compared with non-Indigenous people (4 per cent) (table 8.1.1). Indigenous people consuming alcohol at the risky and high risk levels were more likely to reside in remote areas (table 8.1.2).

Alcohol related crime and hospital statistics

There are no reliable data on the overall extent of alcohol related crime. Data on alcohol related homicides are derived from police records, with their accuracy depending on the Indigenous status of the victim and offender being appropriately recorded.

Hospital data are also very limited, dealing only with admissions for alcohol related illnesses. Cases that involved a visit to a general practitioner or an emergency department, but did not result in admission, are not included.

KEY MESSAGES

- During 1999-2000 to 2001-02, 72.9 per cent of Indigenous homicides involved both the victim and offender having consumed alcohol at the time of the offence – four times the rate for non-Indigenous homicides (figure 8.2.1).
- In 2001-02, mental and behavioural disorders were the most common reason for admissions to hospital for alcohol related conditions for both Indigenous and non-Indigenous people (table 8.2.1).

Drug and other substance use

Drug and other substance use can lead to social and economic disadvantage at the individual, family and community levels. In recent years, illicit drug consumption has played a major role in the involvement of Indigenous people in the criminal justice system. There is a significant correlation between domestic violence and drug and alcohol use in Indigenous communities. The consumption of other substances such as inhalants (for example, petrol and glue) can lead to long-term brain damage, disability or even death.

KEY MESSAGES

- In 2001, marijuana/cannabis was the most common illicit drug used by both Indigenous and non-Indigenous people (table 8.3.1).
- In some jurisdictions, prescription drug misuse was a major cause of hospital admissions in 2001-02 (tables 8A.3.3 to 8A.3.8).

Functional and resilient families and communities

Families and communities are the mainstay of our society. The extent to which either are dysfunctional can have direct impacts on a range of outcomes for Indigenous people, including: life expectancy, education, imprisonment, violence, employment and income. Dysfunctional families and communities can lead to breakdown in relationships and social alienation – significant factors leading to Indigenous disadvantage.

Children on long term care and protection orders

Data in this section only relate to children who have been on a protection order continuously for a year or more. Given that legal intervention is usually a last resort, after other interventions have failed or considered not feasible, it provides some insight into the most serious or long-term instances of child abuse and neglect. Not all orders, however, are due to neglect and abuse – in some cases family difficulties such as a parent being hospitalised or dying may be the reason why a child is placed in care.

KEY MESSAGES

- **Nationally, of those Indigenous children discharged during 2001-02 from a care and protection order, 39.6 per cent had been on the order for at least a year, only slightly more than for non-Indigenous children (37.3 per cent) (table 9.1.1).**
- **Caution is needed in interpreting these data. The data collected by community service departments may under-estimate the true extent of abuse or neglect occurring within the community (section 9.1).**

An increase in notifications and subsequently, care and protection orders, may be a reflection of increased awareness and identification of the problem within the community.

Repeat offending

The cycle of Indigenous imprisonment has severe impacts on families and communities. Rehabilitation and employment prospects for the individual are impaired; so too is the capacity for families to function. Those caught (directly or indirectly) within the imprisonment cycle face an increased likelihood of also being caught in a cycle of disadvantage.

KEY MESSAGES

- **Nationally, the proportion of Indigenous prisoners experiencing prior adult imprisonment was higher than for non-Indigenous prisoners from 1998 to 2002 (figure 9.2.1).**
- **On 30 June 2002, around four in every five Indigenous prisoners had a previous prison record (figure 9.2.1).**

Prior imprisonment is used as a proxy for repeat offending. The true level of repeat offending is under-represented, as not all offences are resolved. As a result, juvenile detentions, convictions which do not lead to imprisonment, and arrests which do not proceed to court are not included in the data.

Access to the nearest health professional

Access to health services is important both in identifying and treating diseases or other problems in a timely way. One indicator relates to the distance clients must travel to access services and facilities.

Health services include primary care and public health services. These services include those provided by: general practitioners; nurses; allied health professionals; acute care in hospitals; and specialist services (such as those provided by obstetricians and eye specialists).

KEY MESSAGE

- **In 2001, 85 per cent of people living in discrete Indigenous communities were within 10 kilometres of a health facility (table 9A.3.3).**

Proportion of Indigenous people with access to their traditional lands

Land is important to Indigenous people both culturally and economically. The aim of this indicator is to evaluate the extent to which Indigenous people have access to their traditional lands.

While no data are available for this year's Report, next year data for this indicator of access will be based on three items in the Indigenous Social Survey which asked people:

- about recognition of their homelands/traditional country;
- whether they currently were living on homelands; and
- whether they were allowed to visit their homelands.

Effective environmental health systems

The conditions in which people live and work have a major influence on their health. Environmental health is about providing safe and healthy living conditions. This includes the houses in which people live, the water they drink, the food they eat and the safe removal of waste.

Rates of diseases associated with poor environmental health

Hospital admissions data suggest that environmental-based diseases are more common among Indigenous than non-Indigenous people. Improvements in sanitation, drinking water quality, food safety, disease control and housing conditions are major contributors to improved health and quality of life.

Research in Indigenous communities has found that infected secretions from eyes, nose, ears and coughs play a major role in transmitting infectious diseases, especially in overcrowded households. Inadequate waste disposal, leading to a pool of potentially infected material in the immediate living environment, is also a major source of infectious disease.

KEY MESSAGES

- In 2001-02, influenza and pneumonia (114.5 per 1000), followed by bacterial disease (62.7 per 1000) and intestinal infectious diseases (58.2 per 1000), accounted for most hospital admissions for environmental diseases for the Indigenous population (table 10.1.1).
- For those three categories of disease, the rates for Indigenous people were respectively around four times, two and a half times and three times higher than for non-Indigenous people (section 10.1).

Access to clean water and functional sewerage

Most Indigenous people live in cities and towns with water supply and sewerage systems common to the general population. Data on water and sewerage services are available for some discrete communities.

KEY MESSAGE

- **In 2001, the reliability of water supplies and sewerage systems was poor in many discrete Indigenous communities (section 10.2).**

During the 12 month period to mid-2001, 35 per cent of all Indigenous communities with a usual population of 50 or more people, experienced water restrictions (with almost 10 per cent of communities experiencing restrictions five times or more in that time).

Overcrowding in housing

Indigenous people were five and a half times more likely to live in overcrowded households than non-Indigenous people in 2001. Overcrowding in housing can be a significant contributor to poor health, family violence and poor educational performance.

KEY MESSAGE

- **Overcrowding was more common among Indigenous households in all regions in 2001, but it was significantly higher in very remote locations (section 10.3).**

The proxy occupancy standard used in the Report compares the number of bedrooms with the number of people in a dwelling to determine overcrowding. However, particularly in larger households, the number of bathrooms and toilets, and the size of kitchens, bedrooms and other living spaces may be just as important as the number of bedrooms.

Economic participation and development

The extent to which people participate in economic life is closely related to their living standards and broader wellbeing. It also influences how they interact at the family and community levels.

This Report examines employment, long term unemployment, land resources and governance as factors in Indigenous economic participation and development.

Employment by sector, industry and occupation

Having a job or being involved in a business activity leads to improved incomes for families and communities (which in turn has a positive influence on health, the education of children etc). It also enhances self-esteem and reduces social alienation.

The type of employment that people are engaged in may also have an impact on their wellbeing – for example, the level of job satisfaction involved.

KEY MESSAGES

- The rate of full time employment in 2001 for Indigenous people was much lower than that for non-Indigenous people in all age groups and geographic regions. Nationally, full time employment as a proportion of the labour force was 41.5 per cent for Indigenous people, compared to 60.2 per cent for non-Indigenous people (figure 11.1.1).
- Indigenous employment had a significant part time component in 2001, with 34.0 per cent of the Indigenous labour force employed part time compared to 30.0 per cent of the non-Indigenous labour force (figure 11.1.2).
- Recorded Indigenous employment is significantly affected by CDEP participation, particularly in very remote areas (section 11.1 and 11.2).

Community Development Employment Projects (CDEP) participation

The CDEP scheme provides employment and training opportunities to over 34 000 Indigenous people in a range of activities that can benefit them and their communities. To participate in the scheme, unemployed members of a community or group choose to give up their Centrelink (unemployment) entitlements. ATSIC offers a grant to the CDEP community organisation to enable it to undertake community-managed activities and pay wages to participants.

KEY MESSAGE

- **CDEP comprises a significant proportion of Indigenous employment, especially in remote and very remote areas, where it can account for the overwhelming majority of jobs (sections 11.1 and 11.2).**

Long term unemployment

People who have been unemployed for long periods generally experience greater financial hardship, and have more difficulty finding employment because of the loss of relevant skills, and employers' perceptions of their 'employability'.

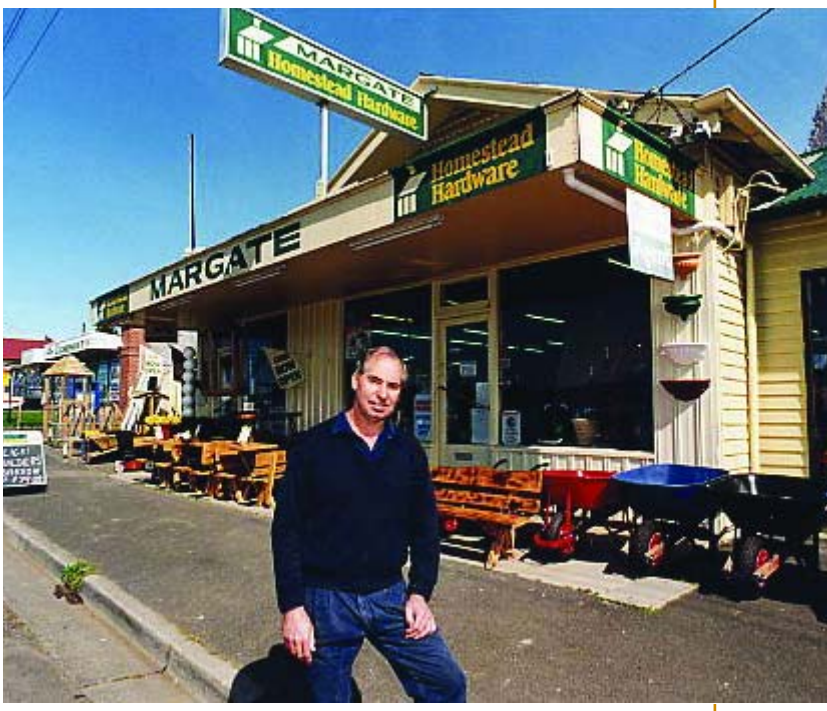
For the purpose of this Report, long term unemployment is defined as people who have been looking for work and receiving payments (youth allowance, newstart allowance or mature age allowance) for a year or more. The data exclude people who participated in CDEP who may otherwise have received these allowances.

KEY MESSAGE

- **Nationally, in 2003 an Indigenous person was slightly more likely to have been in receipt of unemployment benefits while looking for work for a year or more (figure 11.3.1). (This excludes long term CDEP participation.)**

Self employment

Self employed people in this Report comprise those conducting their own business, either with or without employees. Owner-managers of incorporated enterprises have not been included. Some Indigenous people form themselves into cooperative commercial arrangements – for example, artists – and they may not have identified themselves as being self employed in the Census.



KEY MESSAGE

- **Nationally, non-Indigenous people are three times more likely than Indigenous people to be self-employed in 2001; this increases to nine times more likely in very remote areas (figure 11.4.1 and table 11A.4.1).**

Indigenous owned or controlled land

Ownership and control of land can provide both economic and cultural benefits to Indigenous people. Land areas and proportions reported for this indicator are for communally owned or controlled Indigenous land. No data are available on the ownership of land by individuals, other than for home ownership.

The extent to which a parcel of Indigenous-owned land yields economic benefits will depend (among other things) on geographic factors such as climate, soil type and location, the strength of landowners' property rights, and the aspirations of Indigenous landowners themselves.

KEY MESSAGE

- **Nearly all Indigenous owned or controlled land is in very remote areas of Australia (section 11.5).**

Accredited training in leadership, finance or management

Governance has been highlighted during consultations as a major issue for Indigenous communities and organisations. Key issues associated with governance are: culturally informed governance structures, capacity to govern, accountability, civic engagement, and self determination.

For this year's Report, proxy indicators of capacity to govern have been included using data on relevant courses – namely, management and commerce, economics and business law – although students in other courses may be equally well equipped to engage in the work environment (see section 3.4).

KEY MESSAGES

- **A non-Indigenous person was nearly five times more likely to undertake training relevant to the capacity to govern than an Indigenous person in 2001 (figure 11.6.1).**
- **Indigenous women were more likely to undertake this type of training than Indigenous men (table 11A.6.1).**

Case studies in governance arrangements

Governance has been closely linked with economic development and disadvantage, because it is a key determinant of the ability of Indigenous organisations and communities to make and implement decisions that achieve outcomes in a sustainable way.

Indicators of good governance are difficult to construct, but case studies can provide useful insights. While a number of potential case studies were identified, time did not allow for the investigations at first hand needed to ensure their accuracy and usefulness for inclusion in this year's Report. This will be redressed next year.

Future directions in data

Data for Indigenous people are deficient in a number of key areas. Some priorities for data development are listed below:

INDICATOR	DATA PRIORITY
Rates of disability and/or core activity restrictions	• Collect data on prevalence of disability.
Drug and other substance use	• More robust data by jurisdictional and geographic levels are required.
Birthweight	• Extend data collections to babies born to non-Indigenous mothers who have Indigenous fathers.
Hearing impediments	• Collect data to enable the assessment of the type and severity of ear infections in the Indigenous population.
Years 3, 5 and 7 literacy and numeracy	• Collect learning outcomes data to provide timely data by geographic regions.
Preschool and school attendance	• Collect uniform national data. • Ensure consistency and comparability of data across geographic regions.
Transition from school to work	• State and Territory breakdowns of data on the proportion of Indigenous people aged 15-24 'at risk of long term disadvantage' are required.
Education, labour force, unemployment and income	• Better income, education and employment data are required for the Indigenous population. • Better data on CDEP participation, and to enable CDEP to be distinguished from other employment, are required.
Home ownership	• Ensure age standardisation of census and survey data. • Provide separate identification of remote areas.
Access to clean water and functional sewerage	• Data to be made consistent between ABS Community Housing Infrastructure Needs Survey and other collections.

Photography

Cover (Top)

John Little from Wagga Wagga with a Child (one of his 'mob' – a relative) at Walk for Reconciliation across Sydney Harbour Bridge, 2000, image courtesy of ATSIC.

(Centre)

Rita Koitap watering garden of her new home, Mapoon, QLD, 1999, image courtesy of ATSIC.

Jeff Williams, formerly Landcare Supervisor Coober Pedy CDEP - Iwara Kutju, image courtesy of ATSIC.

(Bottom)

Natalie Short and daughter Sherice, Survival Concert, Sydney, 2001, image courtesy of ATSIC.

Page i; Yarrabah Arts and Crafts Centre, image courtesy of ATSIC. Suzie Madua and great granddaughter Jessica Jia at Mapoon, QLD, 1999, image courtesy of ATSIC. Allen Sculthorpe outside his Margate Hardware business, Hobart, 1999, image courtesy of ATSIC. Kirsty Hampton, image courtesy of Aboriginal Hostels Ltd (AHL).

Page 5; Careers Market during Croc Festival, Thursday Island, 2000, image courtesy of ATSIC.

Page 6; Suzie Madua and great granddaughter Jessica Jia at Mapoon, QLD, 1999, image courtesy of ATSIC. John Little from Wagga Wagga with a Child (one of his 'mob' – a relative) at Walk for Reconciliation across Sydney Harbour Bridge, 2000, image courtesy of ATSIC.

Page 7; Kevin Coombs, former Olympian and currently Director of the AHL, image courtesy of Aboriginal Hostels Ltd (AHL).

Page 8; Students from the Fordimail Hostel, Katherine, NT, image courtesy of Aboriginal Hostels Ltd (AHL).

Page 9; Careers Market during Croc Festival, Thursday Island, 2000, image courtesy of ATSIC.

Page 10; Staff: Evol Jarra and Alma Gowa from the Neville Bonner Hostel, Rockhampton, QLD, image courtesy of Aboriginal Hostels Ltd (AHL).

Page 11; Jeff Williams, formerly Landcare Supervisor Coober Pedy CDEP - Iwara Kutju, image courtesy of ATSIC.

Page 12; Rita Koitap watering garden of her new home, Mapoon, QLD, 1999, image courtesy of ATSIC.

Page 16; Woman at Yarrabah Women's Resource Centre (Shelter) QLD, 1999, image courtesy of ATSIC.

Page 20; Natalie Short and daughter Sherice, Survival Concert, Sydney, 2001, image courtesy of ATSIC.

Page 21; Beaudine Pickett, image courtesy of Aboriginal Hostels Ltd (AHL).

Page 22; Child from Brisbane Hostel, image courtesy of Aboriginal Hostels Ltd (AHL).

Page 23; Child from Brisbane Hostel, image courtesy of Aboriginal Hostels Ltd (AHL).

Page 24; Students from Warinna Hostel, Dubbo, image courtesy of Aboriginal Hostels Ltd (AHL).

Page 25; Abie Wright talks to Students from Kotara High School at Yarnteen, NSW, 2001, image courtesy of ATSIC.

Page 26; Careers Market during Croc Festival, Thursday Island, 2000, image courtesy of ATSIC.

Page 27; Students from Warinna Hostel, Dubbo, image courtesy of Aboriginal Hostels Ltd (AHL).

Page 28; CAAAPU - Substance Use Rehabilitation Hostel, Alice Springs, image courtesy of Aboriginal Hostels Ltd (AHL).

Page 29; CAAAPU - Substance Use Rehabilitation Hostel, Alice Springs, image courtesy of Aboriginal Hostels Ltd (AHL).

Page 32; Louise Akenson former co-ordinator of Mapoon Primary Health Care Centre, Mapoon, 1999, image courtesy of ATSIC.

Page 33; Mapoon Primary Health Care Centre, Mapoon, image courtesy of ATSIC.

Page 34; Vickie Little holding glass of drinking water, Cape Barren Island HIPP program, 1998, image courtesy of ATSIC.

Page 35; Yarrabah Arts and Crafts Centre, image courtesy of ATSIC.

Page 36; James Brown in his Camperagent business, Adelaide, 1999, image courtesy of ATSIC.

Page 37; Allen Sculthorpe outside his Margate Hardware business, Hobart, 1999, image courtesy of ATSIC.